Mineral exploration undertaken by MECL

2869. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the major exploration activities undertaken by the Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited (MECL) in various States;

(b) whether MECL has proposed the expansion and diversification of its activities during Tenth Plan;

(c) if so, the programme prepared by MECL thereon; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) The major exploration activities undertaken by MECL during the financial year 2002-03 are as follows:—

(i) Coal exploration in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra & Assam and exploration for lignite in the States of Tamil Nadu & Rajasthan are presently in progress on behalf of Ministry of Coal.

(ii) Coal Bed Methan (CBM) exploration in the State of Rajasthan, on behalf of Department of Petroleum, Government of Rajasthan is in progress.

(iii) Copper exploration in the States of Rajasthan & Madhya Pradesh is in progress on behalf of Ministry of Mines. Besides, exploration for gold in the State of Andhra Pradesh & Karnataka, copper exploration in the States of Rajasthan, Sikkim & Madhya Pradesh and bauxite exploration in the State of Chhattisgarh have been completed during the year.

(iv) Exploration for iron ore in Maharashtra, Manganese ore & bauxite in Orissa and lignite in Tamil Nadu State have been started during the year on contractual basis for various clients.

(b) Yes, Sir. MECL has proposed diversification of its activities during Tenth Five Year Plan 2002—07.

(c) and (d) In addition to the core activities of exploration of various

minerals in traditional sectors as mentioned above. MECL has diversified its activities in the following areas in the Tenth Five Year Plan:—

(i) Coal Sampling & analysis;

(ii) Ballast stone mining for supply to Railways; and

(iii) Deep drilling for CBM studies on behalf of ONGC and other organizations.

The above activities under diversified programme have been continued/undertaken in the first year of Tenth Plan period.

Proposal for New Aluminium Plant in Andhra Pradesh

2870. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO:
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposals to set up new aluminium plant in the State of Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Setting up Aluminium Plants near bauxite reserves

2871. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the States where largest quantum of bauxite reserve areas are found;

(b) whether Government have taken any step to set up aluminium alumina plants on the basis of the bauxite reserves in such States;

(c) whether private sector companies are also keen to set up bauxite base aluminium alumina plants in those States;